

EXCERPTS FROM - The WORLD, Sunday, Aug. 8, 1926
(Summary of Schneider-Bahmer movements)

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Pearl said when she got home she found her father sitting there, and after they had walked up to the ice cream store Nick Bahmer, Hungarian saloon keeper, who was "quite drunk," said, "Let's take a walk to sober me up."

Pearl and her father, going north in George Street, pass the lounging Schneider and his friends, who jump to their feet and follow. Pearl confessed she had long been intimate with Schneider.

"As we got further up," Pearl told the prosecutor, "I turned again and saw Raymond Schneider take off his coat and give it to Clifford Hayes, who put it on over his sweater. I then saw Raymond roll up his sleeves. * * * We sat on the grass. Clifford Hayes and one of the fellows came up and they laid on their stomachs about ten feet from where I and my father was sitting. My father asked them what they wanted, and they replied, 'We are looking for a place to sleep,' and my father said, 'Well, move out of here.' They got up and went on the other side of the street. I and my father then got up and walked further up the street. * * * My father saw them following us, and he said to me, 'If I had a gun I would show you how to get rid of them.'"

"It was after 10 P.M. then. We sat down on the grass (just outside the entrance to Buccleugh Park) and Raymond Schneider and Clifford Hayes circled around us, and then all four met together. They must have missed us, as we saw nothing of them after that. I heard the town clock strike 11 P.M. * * * We arrived home at midnight."

Hayes and Schneider had missed Pearl and Nick Bahmer in the dark. If this was about 10 P.M., as Pearl believed then, Hall and Mrs. Mills had already passed down Easton Avenue, on the far side of the park, and gone up De Russey's Lane. Or if they were together, strolling, they may still have been in Buccleugh Park.

The other boy, or boys, went home, leaving Schneider and Hayes beating about the park, looking for Pearl. The girl said next day Schneider told her he did not recognize "the man" was her father and the reason he followed was:

"If anything happened, we were going to start something."

"You can't fight," said Pearl scornfully, and he replied:

"Well, I got friends. And Clifford Hayes had a gun anyway."

Pearl said he told her:

"When we got to the park following you we missed you. We went through the park and over to Easton Avenue, to the lane, where we saw a man and woman we thought was you and your father."

Hayes testified it was 2.15 when he got home. Pearl was told by Schneider that he had continued to look for her until 3 A.M., when he went home.

While these prowlers were moving about the park like sinister shadows, Norman R. Tingle was sitting on the porch of his home, over in Easton Avenue (or turnpike, as it is called outside town). The Tingles lived in the first house past the Parker house, on the right, about 125 yards from De Russey's Lane.

Q. Tell us what happened that night of unusual importance that attracted your attention. A. Well, we went out on the porch at about 9.45, and we were sitting there talking, and my wife saw a star fall and she remarked that whenever a star fell some one was going to die. I said, "Nettie, I have seen thousands of stars fall."

Then we heard some shots, about three I would say, and there might have been four. My wife said, "Listen to the shots, maybe some one is getting killed."

Q. About what time was that? A. I do not remember exactly. But I think it was between 10:15 and 10:45, as we went to bed about 11.15.

Re-examination of the autopsies, copies of which are possessed by The World, indicate that four shots were fired, one striking Mr. Hall, three striking Mrs. Mills. The reports the Tingles heard just after the falling star are circumstantially the fatal explosions.

Did the night have eyes as well as ears? So far this review has followed The World's carbon copies of the pre-Grand Jury testimony. The name of one other witness must be injected. Mrs. Jane Gibson, long after the hue and cry, went before the Grand Jury and insisted she had recognized Mrs. Hall at the murder scene just off De Russey's Lane. This pig farmer lived in the Middlebush Road, beyond the far end of the lane, and said she had crept up the lane on her Jenny mule while reconnoitring for corn and chicken thieves. Mrs. Nellie Russell challenged the statement, saying the pig woman had been visiting her at the murder hour, and the Grand Jury gave Mrs. Gibson no credence. Officially, the night had no eyes.

If the murders occurred at 10:45 P.M., the next movers in the night, barring the prowling Schneider, were from the Hall and Mills homes.

Mrs. Hall said she got up at 2.30 A.M., alarmed, woke Willie, and the two dressed and walked to St. John's Church, little more than two blocks away. It was dark and locked. She said she remembered the Mills telephone call and walked round past the Mills house, but, seeing no lights, went home again.

Willie confirmed the movement, but insisted they had gone out at 1.30 A.M., and that he remembered the hour because his sister had told him.

Mills said he awoke at 1.50 A.M., looked at the clock, dressed and went to the church, thinking something must have happened to his wife. He was back by 2.30 A.M. So that whether Mrs. Hall and Willie went out at 1.30 or 2.30, they just missed the anxious sexton.

Another witness is drawn in, William Phillips, night watchman at the Women's College, across from the Hall home, who between 2.30 and 3 A.M. heard a dog bark, and walked around in Redmond Street to investigate.

"As I did so I saw a woman walking past and enter the Hall home."

Q. What door did the woman go in? A. I saw her go through the driveway on Redmond Street. I noticed that the lights in the Hall home had been on all night, which was rather unusual.

Q. Did you recognize the woman as Mrs. Hall? A. I do not know. In the house next door a family named Bennett live, and while I was standing there, after the woman passed, Mr. Bennett came out in his underclothes and he said that his dog had jumped through a screen window and said he must have heard me. I said, you did not hear me, I saw a woman just pass and go into the Hall home. Benneet said, "What, a woman this time of the morning!"

The hour of Phillips's vision agrees with the time when Mrs. Hall said she was out, only she stated she was with Willie, and

Phillips saw no man.

Mrs. Hall said she rose at 6 A.M. after a sleepless night and presently rang up the police and guardedly asked "if any casualties had been reported." Before breakfast she drove out with the car with "just a frantic feeling I could see somebody" and finally saw Mills, who told her his wife had been out all night, the first time she had ever done such a thing. She did not officially notify the police until that evening, Friday.

No word came of the missing rector and choir singer. Mills insisted he had no suspicion of elopement. He just thought it was "funny," and his eyes of washed-out blue blinked with simplicity as he said it. Friday went into Saturday. Still no word.

Saturday morning Pearl Bahmer, the saloonkeeper's daughter, comes into the picture again. At 8.45 A.M. she met Schneider under the tracks, the same place she had met him Thursday evening.

Schneider did not lead her into the park. Instead he went straight out Easton Avenue to De Russey's lane, turning at the second wheel rut in the left. Pearl testified:

"As we went in there I asked him, 'Where are you going?'

"He said, 'We will go in here and sit down.'

"He seemed to act as if he wanted to go in this lane. I was never in this lane with him before.

"We passed a man and woman who were laying on the grass. . . . I said, 'Look, Raymond, there is a girl and fellow asleep,' and he would not look and we went straight ahead. We went about twenty feet and sat down and he began to get fresh with me. . . .

"Then we started back for home. We passed the two who was lying on the grass again, and I said to Ray, 'They are lying the same way I saw them.' I said, 'Look!' and he looked kind of sideways and started to walk very fast away. I kept looking over his shoulder till we got a little ways up. Then I let go of his shoulder and stopped, and he kept walking on in a hurry. I started back a few feet and called to him, 'Come here, Ray, just a minute, the people ain't breathing.'

"He said, 'Come and let's walk down the lane, what do we care?'

"He stood quite a ways and I kept calling to him to come. After about fifteen minutes I went over and got him by the hand. He pulled away and said, 'Oh, come on!'

"I told him to come up and look at the people with me. He said, 'If you go as far as the tree I will go with you.' I said, 'You are a man, you should go over.'"

Together the pair edged over, Schneider behind Pearl, and when the girl finally saw two persons unmistakably murdered her courage fled and she with it. Pearl said she "made" Schneider go to a house and telephone, but he was so nervous he dropped the receiver and the woman of the house had to tell the police.

At 11.30 A.M. Dr. Leon Loblein was going by in Easton Avenue when a policeman called him into De Russey Lane, and up at the second turning he saw the bodies, each lying with the legs crossed, one of Mr. Hall's under the blood-clotted head of Mrs. Mills. His straw hat had been laid over his face. Dr. Loblein testified that Hall's clothes "were perfectly arranged," Mrs. Mills stockings, he noticed, "were below her knees."

Pearl Bahmer said she next saw Schneider at 2 P.M. and when she asked: "What are you worrying about?" he replied, "I feel sick

and want to go home and go to bed."

Mrs. Hall and James Mills were notified of the tragedy shortly after noon this day. The authorities wondered about the love letters strewn about the bodies. Mills said he had often noticed his wife writing notes, and the day before the murder had come upon a sheaf of them in the pocket of her shawl, the shawl she was wearing when killed. He took them out, noticed they contained endearments, but had no suspicions, and amusedly put them back. By this explanation it was only accidental that the notes were scattered about De Russey Lane.

Willie Stevens ordered a new suit Saturday, and sent off two old suits which were "very dirty" to be cleaned. He had a .32 calibre Iver Johnson revolver. The authorities found the firing pin had been filed down so the pistol would not shoot. Mrs. Hall said her husband had this done two years' previously for safety's sake.

That, in substance, is the way the Hall-Mills murder case stood nearly four years ago when the investigation petered out. Now the witnesses are scattered. In four years time there has been a bumper crop of hearsay, with the facts getting buried constantly deeper and deeper. Louise Geist has married and separated from Arthur S. Riehl, a New Brunswick youth who turned detective. On the Old Phillips farm only a hole marks where the crabapple tree stood. Its leaves and branches, bark and roots have been plundered by souvenir hunters.

Three who were connected with the case have died, including Prosecutor Beekman of Somerset County. Two are missing, one a former State trooper and the other the mechanic who filed down the firing pin of Willie Stevens's gun. The fame of the unsolved mystery has gone round the world. Cars from Texas and Florida, from Maine and California, have now and again driven up De Russey's Lane for a morbid look.

Pearl Bahmer is in a Catholic protectory. Her father was "sent up." Her ne'er-do-well brother has died in Trenton Prison. James Mills still potters about with his janitorial work and talks about the Hall-Mills case importantly. Mrs. Hall has been twice to Europe. Her house has been renovated, the servants have gone to other households. Peter Tumulty, the chauffeur, has a job across the street, and the widow lives quietly with her brother, Willie. And still remains the riddle: Who killed Edward W. Hall and Eleanor Mills the night of Sept. 14, 1922?